

VZCZCXR07188  
PP RUEHDE  
DE RUEHDO #0526 2091317  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 271317Z JUL 08  
FM AMEMBASSY DOHA  
TO RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8081  
INFO RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI PRIORITY 0421

UNCLAS DOHA 000526

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS TO USTR - JASON BUNTIN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: EAGR ETRD QA

SUBJECT: QATAR ACCEPTS OIE GUIDELINES FOR U.S. BEEF,  
CLEARING PATH FOR RESUMPTION OF U.S. EXPORTS

¶1. Qatar's National Food Safety Committee decided on April 14, 2008 to harmonize its regulations on the import of beef with World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) standards. Due to internal GOQ discussions, Post had been unable to confirm the formal adoption of these guidelines by the GOQ before this week. On July 21, the Committee's Chair sent a letter to the Embassy confirming the changes. The English text of the letter is as follows:

Charge d'Affaires  
U.S. Embassy  
Doha, Qatar

Dear Mr. Michael A. Ratney,

The National Food Safety Committee Meeting No.(6) on April 14, 2008 decided that the importers of beef from the United States of America will no longer require an additional health certificate. The Committee is in agreement to harmonize the Qatar standards to reflect the OIE International Animal Health standards and has suggested the following procedure:

-- The health certificate "Meat and Poultry Certificate of Wholesomeness" is the only official certificate required for importing American beef to Qatar, with no need for any additional health certificate .

-- The "Letterhead Certificate for Export of Beef and Beef Products to Qatar" is not required to accompany the "Meat and Poultry Certificate of Wholesomeness" certificate.

-- In case of further information regarding the beef shipment, please mention it in the "Remarks" space in the "Meat and Poultry Certificate of Wholesomeness" certificate.

Please note that representatives from the intergovernmental committee, including Qatar General Organization for Standards and Metrology, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture, and the National Health Authority Department of Public Health have no objections to using the OIE standards for importation of beef.

Best regards,

Gail Fraser Chanpong, Ph.D.  
Chair, National Food Safety Committee  
Doha, Qatar

Director, Public Health  
National Health Authority, Qatar

¶2. According to the regional Agricultural Attaché posted in Dubai, the Committee's decision to adopt OIE standards for the importation of U.S. beef meets USDA requirements and will allow the USG to certify exports. (Note: The additional certificates mentioned in the letter above were USDA-suggested workarounds for certifying beef exports.

Qatar's decision not to require their use will allow USDA to resume its normal certification process. End Note.) The receipt of the letter appears to draw to a close a five-year battle with the GOQ that began when the health authorities banned the importation of U.S. beef in response to a single case of mad cow disease in 2003.

RATNEY